

IN THE CLAIMS:

A complete listing of the claims is set forth below. Please amend the claims as follows:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A computer-implemented system for distributing consumer demand upstream in a supply chain, comprising:

one or more computer systems having:

a user interface configured to receive a consumer demand for a product to be received at a future date, receive an incentive from a quote system, and communicate the incentive to a consumer;

a quote system configured to receive from the user interface, the consumer demand for the product and determine an incentive based on an order lead time for the product wherein the order lead time for the product represents a time difference between the future date and the current date, the order lead time is longer than a supply channel delay between a downstream supply chain entity and an upstream supply chain entity, and the incentive reflects cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity associated with the order lead time, the quote system further configured to determine an initial payment and one or more interim payments due prior to the consumer receiving the product and communicate the incentive and payments to the user interface; and

a consumer order management system configured to communicate an order for the product to the upstream supply chain entity to allow the consumer to receive the product at the future date from current inventory of the upstream supply chain entity rather than from current inventory of the downstream supply chain entity in exchange for the incentive.

2. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 1, wherein the incentive comprises a price discount on the product.

3. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 1, wherein the quote system is a first quote system and is further configured to:

collaborate with a second quote system associated with the upstream supply chain entity to determine a cost at the upstream supply chain entity associated with the consumer receiving the product from the current inventory of the upstream supply chain entity;

determine a profit increase on the product at the downstream supply chain entity based on:

the cost at the upstream supply chain entity associated with supplying the product from the current inventory of the upstream supply chain entity; and

the cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity associated with the order lead time; and

determine the incentive based on the profit increase.

4. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 1, wherein the quote system is a first quote system and is configured to collaborate with a second quote system associated with the upstream supply chain entity to determine the incentive based on one or more business rules associated with one or more of the downstream and upstream supply chain entities.

5. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 1, wherein:

the future date is a first future date, the incentive is a first incentive, the upstream supply chain entity is a first upstream supply chain entity, and the order lead time is a first order lead time;

the quote system is further configured to:

determine a second incentive based on a second order lead time for the product, the second order lead time for the product representing a time difference between a second future date and the current date, the second order lead time being longer than a second supply channel delay between the downstream supply chain entity and a second upstream supply chain entity, the second incentive reflecting collective cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity and the first upstream supply chain entity associated with the second order lead time; and

communicate the second incentive to the user interface, wherein the user interface further:

receive the second incentive from the quote system; and

communicate the second incentive to the consumer; and

wherein the consumer order management system further communicates an order for the product to the second upstream supply chain entity to allow the consumer to receive the product at the second future date from current inventory of the second upstream supply chain entity rather than from current inventory of the downstream supply chain entity in exchange for the second incentive, the second incentive being larger than the first incentive.

6. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 5, wherein the user interface is configured to convey the first and second incentives to the consumer to choose whether to receive the product at the first future date or the second future date rather than the current date in exchange for the first incentive or the second incentive.

7. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 5, wherein the quote system is a first quote system and is further configured to:

collaborate with a second quote system associated with the second upstream supply chain entity to determine a cost at the second upstream supply chain entity associated with the consumer receiving the product from the current inventory of the second upstream supply chain entity;

determine a profit increase on the product at the downstream supply chain entity based on:

the cost at the second upstream supply chain entity associated with supplying the product from the current inventory of the second upstream supply chain entity; and

the cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity associated with the second order lead time; and

determine the second incentive based on the profit increase.

8. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 5, wherein the quote system is a first quote system and is further configured to collaborate with one or both of a second quote system associated with the first upstream supply chain entity and with a third quote system associated with the second upstream supply chain entity to determine the second incentive based on one or more business rules associated with one or more of the downstream and first and second upstream supply chain entities.

9. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 5, wherein:

the quote system is further configured to:

determine a third incentive based on a third order lead time for the product, the third order lead time for the product representing a time difference between a third future date and the current date, the third order lead time being longer than a third supply channel delay between the downstream supply chain entity and a third upstream supply chain entity, the third incentive reflecting collective cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity and the second upstream supply chain entity associated with the third order lead time; and

communicate the third incentive to the interface, wherein the interface is further configured to:

receive the third incentive from the quote system; and

communicate the third incentive to the consumer; and

the consumer order management system is further configured to communicate an order for the product to the third upstream supply chain entity to allow the consumer to receive the product at the third future date from current inventory of the third upstream supply chain entity rather than from current inventory of the downstream supply chain entity in exchange for the third incentive, the third incentive being larger than the first incentive and the second incentive.

10. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 1, wherein the consumer choosing to receive the product at the future date rather than the current date in exchange for the incentive comprises one of:

the consumer purchasing the product at the current date;

the consumer committing at the current date to purchase the product at the future date; and

the consumer indicating an intention at the current date to purchase the product at the future date.

11. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 1, wherein the consumer receiving the product at the future date comprises one of:

the consumer visiting the downstream supply chain entity at the future date to pick up the product;

the downstream supply chain entity delivering the product to the consumer at the future date; and

the upstream supply chain entity delivering the product to the consumer at the future date.

12. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 1, wherein, the consumer makes an initial payment to the upstream supply chain entity at the current date based on one or more costs to the downstream supply chain entity associated with cancellation of the order.

13. **(Currently Amended)** A computer-implemented method for distributing consumer demand upstream in a supply chain, comprising:

receiving, by a computer, a consumer demand for a product to receive at a future date;

determining, by the computer, an incentive based on an order lead time for the product, the order lead time for the product representing a time difference between the future date and the current date, the order lead time being longer than a supply channel delay between the downstream supply chain entity and an upstream supply chain entity, the incentive reflecting cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity associated with the order lead time;

determining, by the computer, an initial payment and one or more interim payments due prior to the consumer receiving the product;

communicating, by the computer, the incentive and payments to the consumer; and

communicating, by the computer, an order for the product to the upstream supply chain entity to allow the consumer to receive the product at the future date from current inventory of the upstream supply chain entity rather than from current inventory of the downstream supply chain entity in exchange for the incentive.

14. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 13, wherein the incentive comprises a price discount on the product.

15. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 13, comprising:

collaborating with the upstream supply chain entity to determine a cost at the upstream supply chain entity associated with the consumer receiving the product from the current inventory of the upstream supply chain entity;

determining a profit increase on the product at the downstream supply chain entity based on:

the cost at the upstream supply chain entity associated with supplying the product from the current inventory of the upstream supply chain entity; and

the cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity associated with the order lead time; and

determining the incentive based on the profit increase.

16. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 13, comprising collaborating with the upstream supply chain entity to determine the incentive based on one or more business rules associated with one or more of the downstream and upstream supply chain entities.

17. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 13, wherein:

the future date is a first future date, the incentive is a first incentive, the upstream supply chain entity is a first upstream supply chain entity, and the order lead time is a first order lead time;

the method further comprising:

determining a second incentive based on a second order lead time for the product, the second order lead time for the product representing a time difference between a second future date and the current date, the second order lead time being longer than a second supply channel delay between the downstream supply chain entity and a second upstream supply chain entity, the second incentive reflecting collective cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity and the first upstream supply chain entity associated with the second order lead time;

communicating the second incentive to the consumer; and

communicating an order for the product to the second upstream supply chain entity to allow the consumer to receive the product at the second future date from current inventory of the second upstream supply chain entity rather than from current inventory of the downstream supply chain entity in exchange for the second incentive, the second incentive being larger than the first incentive.

18. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 17, comprising conveying the first and second incentives to the consumer to choose whether to receive the product at the first future date or the second future date rather than the current date in exchange for the first incentive or the second incentive.

19. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 17, comprising:

collaborating with the second upstream supply chain entity to determine a cost at the second upstream supply chain entity associated with the consumer receiving the product from the current inventory of the second upstream supply chain entity;

determining a profit increase on the product at the downstream supply chain entity based on:

the cost at the second upstream supply chain entity associated with supplying the product from the current inventory of the second upstream supply chain entity; and

the cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity associated with the second order lead time; and

determining the second incentive based on the profit increase.

20. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 17, comprising collaborating with one or both of the first and second upstream supply chain entities to determine the second incentive based on one or more business rules associated with one or more of the downstream and first and second upstream supply chain entities.

21. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 17, comprising:

determining a third incentive based on a third order lead time for the product, the third order lead time for the product representing a time difference between a third future date and the current date, the third order lead time being longer than a third supply channel delay between the downstream supply chain entity and a third upstream supply chain entity, the third incentive reflecting collective cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity and the second upstream supply chain entity associated with the third order lead time;

communicating the third incentive to the consumer; and

communicating an order for the product to the third upstream supply chain entity to allow the consumer to receive the product at the third future date from current inventory of the third upstream supply chain entity rather than from current inventory of the downstream supply chain entity in exchange for the third incentive, the third incentive being larger than the first incentive and the second incentive.

22. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 13, wherein the consumer choosing to receive the product at the future date rather than the current date in exchange for the incentive comprises one of:

the consumer purchasing the product at the current date;

the consumer committing at the current date to purchase the product at the future date; and

the consumer indicating an intention at the current date to purchase the product at the future date.

23. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 13, wherein the consumer receiving the product at the future date comprises one of:

the consumer visiting the downstream supply chain entity at the future date to pick up the product;

the downstream supply chain entity delivering the product to the consumer at the future date; and

the upstream supply chain entity delivering the product to the consumer at the future date.

24. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 13, wherein, the consumer makes an initial payment to the upstream supply chain entity at the current date based on one or more costs to the downstream supply chain entity associated with cancellation of the order.

25. **(Currently Amended)** A computer-readable media embodied with software for distributing consumer demand upstream in a supply chain, the software when executed using one or more computers is configured to:

receive, a consumer demand for a product to receive at a future date rather than the current date;

determine an incentive based on an order lead time for the product, the order lead time for the product representing a time difference between the future date and the current date, the order lead time being longer than a supply channel delay between the downstream supply chain entity and an upstream supply chain entity, the incentive reflecting cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity associated with the order lead time;

determine an initial payment and one or more interim payments due prior to the consumer receiving the product;

communicate the incentive and payments to the consumer; and

communicate an order for the product to the upstream supply chain entity to allow the consumer to receive the product at the future date from current inventory of the upstream supply chain entity rather than from current inventory of the downstream supply chain entity in exchange for the incentive.

26. **(Previously Presented)** The computer-readable media of Claim 25, wherein the incentive comprises a price discount on the product.

27. **(Previously Presented)** The computer-readable media of Claim 25, wherein the software is further configured to:

collaborate with the upstream supply chain entity to determine a cost at the upstream supply chain entity associated with the consumer receiving the product from the current inventory of the upstream supply chain entity;

determine a profit increase on the product at the downstream supply chain entity based on:

the cost at the upstream supply chain entity associated with supplying the product from the current inventory of the upstream supply chain entity; and

the cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity associated with the order lead time; and

determine the incentive based on the profit increase.

28. **(Previously Presented)** The computer-readable media of Claim 25, wherein the software is further configured to collaborate with the upstream supply chain entity to determine the incentive based on one or more business rules associated with one or more of the downstream and upstream supply chain entities.

29. **(Previously Presented)** The computer-readable media of Claim 25, wherein:

the future date is a first future date, the incentive is a first incentive, the upstream supply chain entity is a first upstream supply chain entity, and the order lead time is a first order lead time;

the software is further configured to:

determine a second incentive based on a second order lead time for the product, the second order lead time for the product representing a time difference between a second future date and the current date, the second order lead time being longer than a second supply channel delay between the downstream supply chain entity and a second upstream supply chain entity, the second incentive reflecting collective cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity and the first upstream supply chain entity associated with the second order lead time;

communicate the second incentive to the consumer; and

communicate an order for the product to the second upstream supply chain entity to allow the consumer to receive the product at the second future date from current inventory of the second upstream supply chain entity rather than from current inventory of the downstream supply chain entity in exchange for the second incentive, the second incentive being larger than the first incentive.

30. **(Previously Presented)** The computer-readable media of Claim 29, wherein the software is further configured to convey the first and second incentives to the consumer to choose whether to receive the product at the first future date or the second future date rather than the current date in exchange for the first incentive or the second incentive.

31. **(Previously Presented)** The computer-readable media of Claim 29, wherein the software is further configured to:

collaborate with the second upstream supply chain entity to determine a cost at the second upstream supply chain entity associated with the consumer receiving the product from the current inventory of the second upstream supply chain entity;

determine a profit increase on the product at the downstream supply chain entity based on:

the cost at the second upstream supply chain entity associated with supplying the product from the current inventory of the second upstream supply chain entity; and

the cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity associated with the second order lead time; and

determine the second incentive based on the profit increase.

32. **(Previously Presented)** The computer-readable media of Claim 29, wherein the software is further configured to collaborate with one or both of the first and second upstream supply chain entities to determine the second incentive based on one or more business rules associated with one or more of the downstream and first and second upstream supply chain entities.

33. **(Previously Presented)** The computer-readable media of Claim 29, wherein the software is further configured to:

determine a third incentive based on a third order lead time for the product, the third order lead time for the product representing a time difference between a third future date and the current date, the third order lead time being longer than a third supply channel delay between the downstream supply chain entity and a third upstream supply chain entity, the third incentive reflecting collective cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity and the second upstream supply chain entity associated with the third order lead time;

communicate the third incentive to allow the consumer; and

communicate an order for the product to the third upstream supply chain entity to allow the consumer to receive the product at the third future date from current inventory of the third upstream supply chain entity rather than from current inventory of the downstream supply chain entity in exchange for the third incentive, the third incentive being larger than the first incentive and the second incentive.

34. **(Previously Presented)** The computer-readable media of Claim 25, wherein the consumer choosing to receive the product at the future date rather than the current date in exchange for the incentive comprises one of:

- the consumer purchasing the product at the current date;
- the consumer committing at the current date to purchase the product at the future date; and
- the consumer indicating an intention at the current date to purchase the product at the future date.

35. **(Previously Presented)** The computer-readable media of Claim 25, wherein the consumer receiving the product at the future date comprises one of:

- the consumer visiting the downstream supply chain entity at the future date to pick up the product;
- the downstream supply chain entity delivering the product to the consumer at the future date; and
- the upstream supply chain entity delivering the product to the consumer at the future date.

36. **(Previously Presented)** The computer-readable media of Claim 25, wherein, the consumer makes an initial payment to the upstream supply chain entity at the current date based on one or more costs to the downstream supply chain entity associated with cancellation of the order.

37. **(Currently Amended)** A computer-implemented system for distributing consumer demand upstream in a supply chain, comprising:

one or more computer system associated with a downstream supply chain entity, the one or more computer systems configured to:

receive, a consumer demand for a product that a consumer may be willing to receive at a future date rather than the current date;

determine an incentive based on an order lead time for the product, the order lead time for the product representing a time difference between the future date and the current date, the order lead time being longer than a supply channel delay between the downstream supply chain entity and an upstream supply chain entity, the incentive reflecting cost savings to the downstream supply chain entity associated with the order lead time;

determine an initial payment and one or more interim payments due prior to the consumer receiving the product;

communicate the incentive and payments to the consumer; and

communicate an order for the product to the upstream supply chain entity to allow the consumer to receive the product at the future date from current inventory of the upstream supply chain entity rather than from current inventory of the downstream supply chain entity in exchange for the incentive.